Teacher Vacancy Survey Report

Report prepared by
Ali Moeller, Ph.D.
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
115 Henzlik Hall
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-0355
amoeller2@unl.edu

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The purpose of this survey was to determine Nebraska emergency teacher shortages in the Fall 2008 by endorsement area and region of the state and what is being done to address those shortages. The survey of all K-12 school districts in the State of Nebraska determined the following:

- The number of districts that could not find qualified, quality teachers*,
- The number of teacher positions for which schools cannot find qualified, quality teachers,
- The endorsement areas for those positions,
- The reasons why individuals in the applicant pool were not sufficient/appropriate for the positions, and
- What schools did to address the shortages.

*Fully qualified personnel is defined as individuals who hold a regular Nebraska (standard, initial, professional, lifetime, trade, teaching or administrative) certificate and the appropriate endorsement for the classes assigned to teach.

Procedures

All K-12 school districts in Nebraska were surveyed, using address labels for 254 districts provided by the Nebraska Department of Education. A cover letter described the importance of the project and the anonymity for all responses. A return postage paid envelope was provided for return of surveys. A number coding system enabled reminders to be sent to non-responding districts during the week that returns were requested. Fax and telephone reminders were made to school districts to encourage participation.

Surveys requested the following information
- Community College Region in which district is located
- Size of K-12 school enrollment
- Whether or not at the beginning of the school year (Fall 2008) the district had teaching positions that were not filled with fully qualified personnel
- Endorsement area required for each designated position
- Reason for not being able to fill the position
- How the district solved the dilemma for the position
- Additional comments about the solution
- A description of applicant pools (i.e., improved, same, worse) for all vacant positions for the fall of 2008

Results

Response Rate. A total of 254 K-12 school districts were contacted and requested to respond to the survey. Response rate was *very high (96.5%) with 245 districts completing and returning surveys.* Table 1 reports the distribution of K-12 districts and of the return sample by regions (i.e. Community College Region). The distributions match extremely well, a .4 variation in the Panhandle region, West Central region .4 variation; Northeast region .5 variation; Central .9 variation; Southeast .1 variation; Omaha Metro .2 variation, (average of all six regions is .41) indicating that the sample is regionally representative of K-12 districts in the state.

<u>Districts with Unfilled Positions.</u>
There were 51 districts with unfilled positions (20.8% of the returned sample). Table 2 presents the distribution of those districts by region. Table 3 presents the distribution of districts with unfilled positions by size of district. Over one-half (56.8%) of the districts with unfilled positions had less than 500 students. 74.4% of the districts with unfilled positions had less than 1000 students.

Unfilled Positions
There were a total of 64 unfilled positions. Table 2 identifies the percentages of unfilled positions by region. Table 3 identifies the percentages of unfilled positions by district size. 56.8% of the unfilled positions (34 positions) were in districts with less than 500 students and 74.4% (44 positions) in districts with less than 1000 students.

Endorsement Areas
Tables 4 and 5 indicate the numbers of unfilled positions by endorsement area, with totals and by region and district size, respectively. The endorsement areas of special education (9; 14.1%), and Spanish (9; 14.1%) topped the list of unfilled positions. Additional areas of need include Speech Pathology (8; 12.5%); English Education (7; 10.9%), Science (5; 7.8%) Industrial Technology (4; 6.3%), Art Education (4; 6.3%), Mathematics (4; 6.3%) and Behavioral Science (4; 6.3%)

Reasons for Unfilled Positions
Reasons reported for the unfilled positions varied from no applicants with the appropriate endorsement area (50.0%), no quality applicants (42.2%), no applicants (26.6%) to qualified applicant refused offer for position (12.5%). Tables 6-8 present the percentages of reasons for unfilled positions by region, district size and endorsement area respectively. Of the 64 position openings, 63 reported reasons for unfilled positions (multiple reasons were allowed for an unfilled position, therefore, frequencies and percentages might not sum to n and one respectively). Of the 64 reporting, the most frequently reported reason for unfilled positions was no applicants with the appropriate endorsement area (32 positions), no quality applicants (27 positions), no applicants (17 positions), and lastly, qualified applicant refused offer for position (8 positions). 71.4% of the districts under the size of 500 cited no applicants with the appropriate endorsement area, 42.8% cited no quality applicants, 21.4% cited no applicants, 17.8% cited qualified applicant refused offer for position,

Solutions for Unfilled Positions
Reported solutions for the unfilled positions varied. The most frequently reported solutions included: hired a person with a provisional certificate (17 positions or 26.6%); rearranged existing faculty assignments to accommodate the classes not being covered (11 positions or 17.2%); hired a person who was fully certified, but not endorsed in the required area (9 positions or 14.1%); hired a person with a provisional endorsement (9 positions, or 14.1%); using long-term substitute and continuing to advertise the position (7 positions or 10.9%); other reasons (7 positions or 10.9%); using a student teacher until s/he is able to qualify for a regular certificate (4

positions, or 6.3%); utilizing distance education to provide the course (4 positions or 6.3%). Table 9 depicts the percentages of solutions by endorsement area.

Perceptions of Pools

Survey respondents were also asked their perception of the applicant pools this year in comparison to the previous four years. With regard to quality of applicant pools 62.8% perceived the quality as the same, 15.0% of respondents perceived the quality as improved, and 22.9% as worse. With regard to the quantity of applicants, 43.9% of respondents perceived the quantity as the same, 49.5% as worse, and 6.9% as improved. Tables 10 and 11 present a breakdown of perceptions of the quality and quantity of applicant pools by size and region of districts. The quality of the applicant pool as reported by region and district size is seen as about the same 64.6% (by region) and 61% (by district); 15.0% see the quality of the applicant pool as improved; 20.3% (by region) 25.6 (by district) see the quality of the applicant pool as worse. As regards the quantity of the applicant pool, 43.9% see the applicant pool as the same, 49.2% as worse, and 6.9% as improved.

Table 1. Number of Districts in Original and Return Sample by Region

Region	Original Population		Return Sample		Percentage Return
	No. of Districts	%	No. of Districts	%	
Panhandle	24	9.4	24	9.8	100.00%
West Central	29	11.4	29	11.8	100.00%
Northeast	60	23.6	59	24.1	98.33%
Central	74	29.1	69	28.2	93.24%
Southeast	49	19.3	47	19.2	95.92%
Omaha Metro	18	7.1	17	6.9	94.44%
Total	254	100.0	245	100.0	96.46%

Table 2. Number of Districts with Unfilled Positions and Number of Unfilled Positions by Region

Region	Districts with Unfilled Positions		Unfilled Positions	
	No.	%	No.	%
Panhandle	8	15.7	10	15.6
West Central	6	11.8	7	10.9
Northeast	10	19.6	11	17.2
Central	14	27.5	17	26.6
Southeast	9	17.6	11	17.2
Omaha Metro	4	7.1	8	12.5
Total	51	100.0	64	100.0

Table 3. Number of Districts with Unfilled Positions and Number of Unfilled Positions by District Size

District Size	Districts with Unfilled Positions		Unfilled Positions	
	No.	%	No.	%
≤ 100	0	0.0	0	0.0
101 – 250	12	23.5	14	21.9
251 – 500	17	33.3	20	31.3
501 – 1,000	9	17.6	10	15.6
1,001 – 2,500	6	11.8	8	12.5
2,501 – 5,000	2	3.9	4	6.3
5,001 – 10,000	2	3.9	2	3.1
> 10,000	3	5.9	6	9.4
Total	51	100.0	64	100.0

Table 4. Number of Unfilled Positions by Endorsement Area and Region

Endorsement Area	Region						Total (%)
	Panhandle	West Central	Northeast	Central	Southeast	Omaha Metro	
Art Ed	2	1		1			4 (6.3)
English	3			1	2	1	7 (10.9)
Family and Consumer Science		1					1 (1.6)
Industrial Tech		1	2	1			4 (6.3)
Mathematics		2	1	1			4 (6.3)
Music Ed			1	1	1		3 (4.7)
Physical Ed					1		1 (1.6)
Science	1	1	1	2			5 (7.8)
Speech Lang Pathology				2	2	4	8 (12.5)
Special Ed	1	1		3	1	3	9 (14.1)
Spanish	1		4	3	1		9 (14.1)
Guidance Counselor				1	1		2 (3.1)
Early Childhood/Special Ed			1				1 (1.6)
Early Childhood					1		1 (1.6)
Psychologist					1		1 (1.6)
Behavioral Science	2		1	1			4 (6.3)
Total	10	7	11	17	11	8	64

Table 5. Number of Unfilled Positions by Endorsement Area and District Size

Endorsement Area	District Size								Total (%)
	≤ 100	101 - 250	251 - 500	501- 1,000	1,001 - 2,500	2,501 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	> 10,000	
Art Ed		2	2						4 (6.3)
English			4	2				1	7 (10.9)
Family and Consumer Science		1							1 (1.6)
Industrial Tech		1	2			1			4 (6.3)
Mathematics		1	1	1	1				4 (6.3)
Music Ed		1	1		1				3 (4.7)
Physical Ed		1							1 (1.6)
Science			3	2					5 (7.8)
Speech Lang Pathology				1	1	2	1	3	8 (12.5)
Special Ed		1	1	2	1	1	1	2	9 (14.1)
Spanish		3	2	1	3				9 (14.1)
Guidance Counselor		1	1						2 (3.1)
Early Childhood/Special Ed		1							1 (1.6)
Early Childhood				1					1 (1.6)
Psychologist					1				1 (1.6)
Behavioral Science		1	3						4 (6.3)
Total	0	14	20	10	8	4	2	6	64

Table 6. Reasons for Unfilled Positions by Region

Region	Reasons[**]				
	No Applicants (%)	No Quality Applicants (%)	No Applicants with the appropriate endorsement area (%)	Qualified applicant refused offer for position (%)	n[*]
Panhandle	2 (25.0)	2 (25.0)	7 (87.5)		8
West Central	3 (50.0)	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)		6
Northeast	3 (33.3)	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	4 (44.4)	9
Central	5 (35.7)	8 (57.1)	6 (42.9)	3 (21.4)	14
Southeast	2 (22.2)	5 (55.6)	6 (66.7)	1 (11.1)	9
Omaha Metro	2 (50.0)	7 (175.0)	3 (75.0)		4
Total	17 (26.6)	27 (42.2)	32 (50.0)	8 (12.5)	64

* No reason was given for 1 out of 64 unfilled positions (1 in the Northeast).

** Multiple reasons were allowed for an unfilled position. Therefore, frequencies and percentages might not sum to n and one, respectively.

Table 7. Reasons for Unfilled Positions by District Size

District Size	Reasons[**]				
	No Applicants (%)	No Quality Applicants (%)	No Applicants with the appropriate endorsement area (%)	Qualified applicant refused offer for position (%)	n[*]
≤ 100					0
101 – 250	3 (27.3)	4 (36.4)	8 (72.7)	2 (18.2)	11
251 – 500	3 (17.6)	8 (47.1)	12 (70.6)	3 (17.6)	17
501 – 1,000	4 (44.4)	2 (22.2)	4 (44.4)	1 (11.1)	9
1,001 – 2,500	4 (66.7)	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	2 (33.3)	6
2,501 – 5,000	1 (50.0)	3 (150.0)			2
5,001 – 10,000	1 (50.0)	2 (100.0)	1 (50.0)		2
> 10,000	1 (33.3)	5 (166.7)	4 (133.3)		3
Total	17 (26.6)	27 (42.2)	32 (50.0)	8 (12.5)	64

* No reason was given for 1 out of 64 unfilled positions (1 in district size of 101-250).

** Multiple reasons were allowed for an unfilled position. Therefore, frequencies and percentages might not sum to n and one, respectively.

Table 8. Reasons for Unfilled Positions by Endorsement Area

Endorsement Area	No Applicants	No Quality Applicants	No Applicants with the appropriate endorsement area	Qualified applicant refused offer for position
			Reasons [**]	
Art Ed	1	2	2	
English		3	7	
Family and Consumer Science			1	
Industrial Tech		1	3	1
Mathematics	1	3	1	1
Music Ed	1		1	1
Physical Ed		1	1	
Science	2		2	1
Speech Lang Pathology	3	5	3	
Special Ed	3	5	4	
Spanish	5	4	4	1
Guidance Counselor	1	1		
Early Childhood		1		
Psychologist				1
Behavioral Science		1	3	2
Total	17	27	32	8

* No reason was given for 1 out of 64 unfilled positions
** Multiple reasons were allowed for an unfilled position.

Table 9. Solutions for Unfilled Positions by Endorsement Area

Endorsement Area	Solution***												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Art Ed			2			1							1
English		2	2	1		1			1	1			
Family and Consumer Science		1											
Industrial Tech			2			1	1			1			
Mathematics			2	1	1	1						1	1
Music Ed		1				1		1					
Physical Ed		1											
Science		1	1	1						1			1
Speech Lang Pathology		2			1	3			1				3
Special Ed		1	1	1		2			3	1	1		
Spanish	1		3						2		1	2	1
Guidance Counselor			1									1	
Early Childhood/Special Ed				1									
Early Childhood				1									
Psychologist						1							
Behavioral Science			3	3									
Total**	1	9	17	9	2	11	1	1	7	4	2	4	7
(%)*	(1.6)	(14.1)	(26.6)	(14.1)	(3.1)	(17.2)	(1.6)	(1.6)	(10.9)	(6.3)	(3.1)	(6.3)	(10.9)

* N=64. No solution was given for 1 out of 64 unfilled positions.
** Multiple solutions were allowed for an unfilled position. Therefore, percentages might not sum to one.

*** Solutions:
1. Find a fully certified, appropriately endorsed person
2. Hired a person who was fully certified, but not endorsed in the required area.
3. Hired a person with a provisional certificate.
4. Hired a person with a provisional endorsement.
5. Hired a retired teacher to come back to work.
6. Rearranged existing faculty assignments to accommodate the classes not being covered.
7. Dropped the courses which could not be covered.
8. Canceled/postponed the classes until an appropriate teacher can be found.
9. Using a long-term substitute and continuing to advertise the position
10. Using a student teacher until s/he is able to qualify for a regular certificate.
11. Hired a person who was previously a substitute teacher.
12. Utilizing distance education to provide the course (2-way interactive, internet, independent study, etc.)
13. Other

Table 10. Perceived Quality and Quantity of Applicant Pool by Region

Region	Quality				Quantity			
	Improved (%)	Same (%)	Worse (%)	N	Improved (%)	Same (%)	Worse (%)	N
Panhandle	2 (8.3)	16 (66.7)	6 (25.0)	24	1 (4.2)	8 (33.3)	15 (62.5)	24
West Central	4 (13.8)	20 (69.0)	5 (17.2)	29		11 (37.9)	18 (62.1)	29
Northeast	12 (20.3)	36 (61.0)	11 (18.6)	59	6 (10.2)	30 (50.8)	23 (39.0)	59
Central	10 (14.5)	43 (62.3)	16 (23.2)	69	5 (7.2)	28 (40.6)	36 (52.2)	69
Southeast	6 (12.5)	34 (70.8)	8 (16.7)	48	3 (6.3)	24 (50.0)	21 (43.8)	48
Omaha Metro	3 (17.6)	10 (58.8)	4 (23.5)	17	2 (11.8)	7 (41.2)	8 (47.1)	17
Total	37 (15.0)	159 (64.6)	50 (20.3)	246	17 (6.9)	108 (43.9)	121 (49.2)	246

Table 11. Perceived Quality and Quantity of Applicant Pool by District Size

District Size	Quality				Quantity			
	Improved (%)	Same (%)	Worse (%)	N	Improved (%)	Same (%)	Worse (%)	N
≤ 100	1 (20.0)	2 (40.0)	2 (40.0)	5		4 (80.0)	1 (20.0)	5
101 – 250	12 (15.4)	48 (61.5)	18 (23.1)	78	6 (7.7)	31 (39.7)	41 (52.6)	78
251 – 500	14 (17.1)	51 (62.2)	17 (20.7)	82	5 (6.1)	34 (41.5)	43 (52.4)	82
501 – 1,000	6 (13.3)	32 (71.1)	7 (15.6)	45	4 (8.9)	21 (46.7)	20 (44.4)	45
1,001 – 2,500	3 (16.7)	13 (72.2)	2 (11.1)	18	2 (11.1)	8 (44.4)	8 (44.4)	18
2,501 – 5,000		8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)	11		6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	11
5,001 – 10,000		4 (100.0)		4		2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	4
> 10,000	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	3		2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)	3
Total	37 (15.0)	159 (61.0)	50 (25.6)	246	17 (6.9)	108 (43.9)	121 (49.9)	246